

REMARKS

Applicants first wish to thank Examiner Blount for his willingness to discuss the Office Action with Applicants' undersigned attorney by telephone on or about May 1st and 23rd. At the Examiner's suggestion, the above claim amendments were provided to the Examiner on May 15th for discussion. No agreement was reached, although the Examiner believed that at least independent claims 1 and 15, as amended, may be allowable over the prior art currently of record. However, the Examiner stated that he may update his search of the prior art.

Claims 1-20 are pending, including independent claims 1, 6, 8, and 15. Previously, several claims were found to contain patentable subject matter. Now, however, only dependent claim 4 is found to contain patentable subject matter. The remaining claims have been rejected over a new combination of prior art. Although Applicants disagree with the current rejections, the independent claims have been amended to further clarify the claimed invention and to expedite prosecution.

At the outset, Applicants point out that they are not claiming a router per se, or a "time to live" field per se. Further, the claims do not recite the network operation in which a message is merely transmitted from an originating node through intermediate nodes to a specified destination node in the network.

Claim 1, for example, describes a message processing device in an inter-vehicle network of a plurality of message processing devices located in respective vehicles for transferring messages among the vehicles. Each such message processing device can process an incoming message having a header and a body including data to be transmitted, where the header includes a time duration in which the message is valid. When a message processing device in the network receives a message, it determines whether the message is in the valid time duration. If so, a message transferring unit transfers the message on to at least one other message processing device in the network, and an application processing unit reads out the data in the message body and executes predetermined processing (other than transferring the message). In operation, therefore, each message processing device that receives the transferred

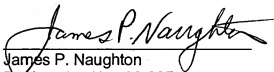
message during the valid time will execute the predetermined processing, as well as transfer the message on.

Independent claim 15 has been amended and recites a similar message processing device in an inter-vehicle network, wherein each message processing device in the network that receives the transferred message in a valid geographical zone will transfer the message on as well as execute the predetermined processing (other than transferring the message).

Independent claims 6 and 8 have been amended to clarify that each message processing device in the network is constructed as claimed, and the predetermined processing that is conducted by each message processing device is other than and in addition to transferring the message on.

Applicants submit that the presently claimed invention patentably distinguishes over the cited art. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application. If the Examiner believes the application still is not in condition for allowance, he is invited to telephone Applicants' undersigned attorney at 312-321-4723.

Respectfully submitted,



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